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The ERROR of them who devise EVIL.

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S E R M O N

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PROV. XII. 22. *former part.*

Do not they Err that devise Evil?



HIS Book of the Holy Scripture is a Collection of *Aphorisms*, or short independent Sentences, compos'd by Solomon the wisest of Men, and that, as the Jews tell us, in his middle Age, when his Understanding was in its greatest Vigour and Maturity, and under the Inspiration of GOD's Holy Spirit too. Coherence of the Parts, and Dependence of *one* thing upon another, is not to be expected in this way of Writing: For every distinct Sentence is to be taken *by it self*. and makes up an entire Sense. We are therefore say'd the Labour of consulting the Context, to come at the Sense of the Words of my Text. They are to be taken as they lie. And tho they are propos'd by way of *Interrogation*, yet this, according to the *Hebrew Idiom* in many Passages, is but the more *vehement Assertion* of an obvious Truth.

DO they not Err that devise Evil? Is as much as to say, "I may make an Appeal to common Sense and Experience? A little Reflexion on the Nature of Things, an easy and slight Observation of Events in the World, will make it evident, that such as *devise Evil* do Err, or will Err (as *Montanus* renders *it*) and that very grossly." This is the Truth asserted in the Text, and in speaking it, I shall observe this Method.

I. *First*, ENQUIRE what is implied in *devising Evil*?

II. *Secondly*, IN what Sense they may be said to Err who do so.

III. *Thirdly*, BRING home this to the Matter of our *present Solemnity*.

IV. *Lastly*, ENDEAVOUR to make all *subserve the Purposes of Practical Religion*. Of each in Order. And

I. *First*, LET us enquire what is meant by *devising Evil*. And this Enquiry will naturally resolve it self into Two; (*First*,) What is intended by *Evil* here; And (*Secondly*,) what by *devising it*.

1. LET us enquire what is intended by *Evil* in this Text. And in general it signifies *Harm* or *Mischief* done to any. The *Original* being deriv'd from a Word that signifies to *Hurt*, or *be Mischievous*. Now Persons may do *Mischief* in *Sport*, or out of *Spite*. Both kinds come within the meaning of the Text; but the last proceeding from the worse Principle, is, as I conceive, chiefly intended. When from a Mind chaf'd with *Anger*, or fretted with *Envy*, or sour'd with *Malice*, Men are set upon doing *Harm* to others, whether in their *Persons*, *Reputation*, *Relations* or *Possessions*; or whether it be done in a manner *Open* and *Undisguis'd*, or in a way that is more close and covered. And such *Harm* or *Mischief* may admit of several Degrees, which it will be worth our while to run over upon this Occasion. For instance,

1. *First*, IT may be done to a *private Person* after some *Provocation* given by him. A Man may receive an *Injury* or *Affront* from another, and may thereupon grow angry; and in the Heat of *Passion*, or with more cool and deliberate *Revenge*, may *Hurt* him in his *Person*, *Detract* from his *Character* and *Reputation*, *Damage* him in his *Estate*, or *Wound* him in any *Interests* that are dear to him. Now this is properly doing *Mischief* or *Evil*. And tho there be some preceding *Provocation* to it, and for that Reason it is not so *Criminal* as some other kinds of it are, yet doth it come within the meaning of our Text, and is certainly prohibited by
the

the Laws of our Redeemer. We * *are to Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil; nor † avenge our selves, but rather give Place to Wrath; and not ‡ be overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good.* And then we are overcome by Evil, when we yield our selves up to the Conduct and Impulse of our Passions, so as by them to be hurried upon the Commission of any *Moral Evil*, or upon doing Mischief to others, if it be only by way of *Retaliation* for Injury we have received from them. But,

2. Secondly, THIS Mischief may be done to a *private Person*, who is wholly *Innocent* and *Inoffensive*; who never gave any Provocation, or so much as *offer'd* or *intended* any Injury or Affront. Some Men are so mischievous as without Provocation, to hurt and injure others; and this they sometimes do, from an hurtful Sportiveness and a frolicksom Humour, that delights in reizing a Neighbour, not so much out of *ill Will* to him, as from an unaccountable Pleasure taken in the passionate Transports of other Men. Sometimes they do it from a spiteful Temper of Mind, and downright Rancour and Malignity, that envies the *Good* of a Neighbour, and can't bear to see him Easy and Prosperous, or rejoices in his *Misfortune* and *Misery*. Such was the Temper of wicked *Haman*, that great Favourite of the *Persian King Abasuerus*, who amidst all his Honour and Interest at Court, amidst all his Grandeur and Wealth, could have no Enjoyment of himself, whilst he saw *Mordecai* ** *sitting at the King's Gate*. And one under the Influence of this Temper will blacken the Character, and seize the Possessions, and take away the Life of a Neighbour (where he can do it with Security to himself) tho he never did him *Harm*, tho he may be kind and ready to do him any *good Offices*, and may be a very *useful Member* of a Community too. These things never come into his Thoughts, or at least if they do, have no Power to divert him from his mischievous Intention. And this Temper, when it is grown up to Perfection, is the very *Spirit of the Devil*.

‡ Rom. xii. 17. † Ver. 19. ‡ V. 21. ** Esth. v. 13.

BUT Men may not always be prompted by Malice or Envy to be thus mischievous, and yet may do Mischief with *aggravated Guilt* too, whilst they are put upon it by those on whom they may have dependance, to gratify *their* Resentment or Malignity; may be hired to do it with Money, or brib'd with Proposals of Honour and Advancement. But whatever be the Source and Spring of the Mischief, it is *more Criminal* when done to those that are Innocent, and who have done the Authors of it no Injury, than in the former Case, when we suppose it done *upon Provocation*. This may be some Mitigation of the Crime, tho it will not wholly excuse it. But when there is no Provocation, it must be the Issue of a Mind that hath abjur'd all Tenderness and Regard for its Fellow Creatures, is shrunk wholly into it self, and thereby become the full Property of him * *who was a Murderer from the beginning*. But

3. *Thirdly*, WE may conceive this Mischief as extending beyond a *single Person*, to *all that is dear to him*. The Author of it may not be content to make a Sacrifice of him *only*, but would involve all for whom he hath any Concern, in the same Hurt or Ruin. Thus proud *Haman* scorn'd to take Revenge on *Mordecai* singly, and by himself; he would have involv'd all the † People of the *Jews* in the same Calamity with him, and pleas'd himself to think, that this way he should double his Blow upon *Mordecai*, and take away his Life more than once, by decreeing Destruction for his People together with him.

AND indeed this is a *spreading Flame*, when once it is kindled, and how far it will waste is not easy to foresee; it is seldom satisfied with a single Execution, or glutted with one Act of Mischief, how vast and extensive soever *that* be. Nay, if the Mischief done be not the Effect of Malice or Revenge in the *immediate Actor*, yet if *he* be the Property of one that is implacable, he is by one Act of Villany let into a Scene of Mischief as *extensive* as revengeful Thought; which

* *John* viii. 44. † *Esther* iii. 6.

will be ever busy and starting fresh Game, and is In-
satiabile as Death and the Grave. The Wretch who is
of this spiteful or revengeful Temper, is not con-
tent to take away the good Name, the Estate, or Life
of a Person who hath *injur'd* him, or is *envy'd* by him,
but would reach out the same Mischief to his *Relatives*,
and (if it were possible) stab him over again, by the
Repetition of the same Vengeance upon those that are
Dear to him.

4. *Fourthly*, WE may consider this Mischief as done
to Persons in *high Rank*, and who, by reason of their
eminent Qualifications, may be term'd the *Pillars* of a
Society. Men may by some *Instigations* be carried on
to such Mischief as this, sometimes without consider-
ing what a Compass it takes, and sometimes with all
the dreadful Consequences in full View and in direct
Intention. They may act thus from *Malice* to their
Persons, *Envy* and *Spleen* at their Advancement, *Dis-*
content at their Methods of Management, or the
Successes of them; or they may do it at the Instigati-
on of others, and by prospect of Rewards or Advan-
tages, may *traduce* their Conduct, *sully* their Charact-
ers, *invade* their Properties, and *attempt* their Lives,
and be restless till in one or all these Instances they
have done them Mischief. Thus did the Courtiers of
Darius deal with *Daniel*: They repin'd at his Advance-
ment above *them*, and would fain have * *found* him
faulty in his Administration; but this Design failing,
they contriv'd a Method to † *make* him so. And having
flatter'd the *unwary King* thus far into their Measures,
thought to traduce him to his Prince, as void of *due*
Respect for him, and then make a Sacrifice of him to
their Envy and Revenge.

NOW such a Mischief as this, according to the
Rank a Man holds in the Community, may be *much*
greater than any kind we have been mentioning under
the preceding Particulars; for it may not only extend
to a Man's immediate Dependants, but be a Detriment
also to the whole Community, and perhaps prove its

* Dan. vi. 4. † V. 12, 13.

Ruin. The Preservation of the *whole Body* may many Times depend upon the Life and Credit of *one particular Man*. How fatal had the Consequences been, had the Assassination-Plot, in the Days of King *Villiam*, taken effect, and that glorious Prince fallen a Sacrifice to those who *hunted for his precious Life*! Or had our present gracious Sovereign King *GEORGE* been taken off, when the late desperate and unnatural Rebellion broke out, how vast a Mischief had succeeded! *Britain* and *Europe* had very probably fallen with him. Blessed be *GOD* that he has lived to triumph over his Enemies; may he live to conquer their Hearts by the *Clemency* and *Justice* of his Administration, and his hearty Zeal for the Honour and Interest of *Britain*, as he has prevail'd against them *in the Field of Battle*. But,

5. Finally, WE may conceive a Mischief big with the Ruine of a *Kingdom* or *Community*, and contriv'd to effect it, aiming at the Destruction of *all* who are its *Pillars* and *Supports*. Whatever be the Motives to such *immense* and *prodigious* Wickedness, or whatever the Principles upon which the *Actors* proceed. Men may contrive to embroil a Nation, or destroy it by *Foreign Invasion*, *Domestick Insurrection*, or *Assassination* of those *Chiefs* in Society, that are as it were its *Joints* and *Bands*. Those who follow the Dictates of a revengeful Temper, and have but *Influence* and *Interest* in any proportion to their Revenge and Spite, may be easily carried this Length; nay, some may be moved to so vast a Mischief, by a Prospect of Gain and Advantage to themselves, or a *lewd Inclination* to acquire a Name. The *Prince of Darkness*, the avowed Enemy of *GOD* and Goodness, is always ready to prompt Men to the most *Daring* and *Comprehensive* Wickedness; and when once they are engag'd, he pushes them violently on to the Accomplishment of the Design. And is it any Wonder, when Men resign themselves wholly to the Conduct of so *furious a Leader*, that they should affect to be as like Him as possible? As mischievous as himself, who was but too successful in his Attempt to efface the *Image of GOD* out of all the inferior Creation, and ruin the whole Race of Mankind. But then Mischief is grown to a kind of Perfection,

fection, and as complete as it can well be in Man; when the Ruin of *whole Nations* is attempted at once, whether it be by Persons in Power, who are still greedy of more, or Persons out of Power, who are catching eagerly at it; whether it be the Projection of a single Person, or of a Confederacy and Combination, and by whatever Methods the Attempt is made.

AND thus have we done with our first Enquiry, what we are to understand by Evil in our Text.

II. Secondly, WE are to enquire what is implied in *devising Evil*? And to answer this Enquiry to satisfaction, it will be proper to remember (what we have been observing already) that the Evil here spoken of is chiefly to be understood of that which proceeds from Spite and Rancor, whether the Original of it be *pure Malice* or *Revenge*. For though I have touch'd on that which proceeds from a *ludicrous Temper*, tickled and delighted with the *little Misfortunes* of others, yet the Men of this Disposition are not, generally speaking, thoughtful enough to invent or effect any *complete* or *important* Mischief. And though the *immediate Instruments* of Mischief, employ'd by others, may not have any great degree of Spite and Rancour against those to whom they do harm; but only pursue their own Interest, or proceed out of Complaisance to those who employ them, yet is it *Malice*, or *Envy*, or *Revenge* that must set him to work, who is the *principal Author* and *Projector* of any considerable Mischief. And this I would lay down as ever implied in, and indeed presuppos'd to, a Man's *devising Mischief*, that in *that interval* *Malignity* prevails, and has the Ascendant in him. Indeed it may have this Ascendant at a particular Season only. It may not be a Man's general and commanding Temper to be *mischievous*. Or the Effects of his mischievous Temper may not be Universal: But as Madness is many Times only *quoad hoc*, in a particular Instance, when a Man is in his sound Sense in other Respects; so a Man may be Malignant and Mischievous in *some Cases*, and towards *some Persons*, when he is not so universally. But still, when he sets himself to *devise Evil*, all the angry Passions, *Resentment*, *Revenge*, *Envy*, *Malice*, &c.

are allow'd their full Scope, without check and controul. He may have had Provocation given him, and he may so far hearken to the Dictates of Revenge upon a particular Occasion, and yield to their Influences, as to form the most cruel Resolutions against those that have injur'd him, and endeavour to execute those Purposes, when this is not his general Temper; or he may have a Spite at particular Persons, when he is good natur'd enough in his common Conduct towards others. But at whatever Time, or in whatever Instances, or against whatever Persons he sets himself to devise Evil, at that interval Malignity prevails, and hath the Ascendant in him.

AND a Man may be almost under the constant Influence of such a wicked Temper, may be peevish and envious, and rough and untractable, and like an Hedgehog, roll himself up, and turn out his Bristles against all Mankind. And then he is not only mischievous upon particular Occasions, and as to particular Persons, but pleaseth himself with doing Mischief whoever receives it. And this may proceed from his giving himself up to the Conduct of furious Passions, and suffering himself to be born away with their Impetus, without any opposition, or attempt to stem the Torrent. He hath permitted them to kindle upon slight Provocations, and never given any Check to them, but indulg'd them in all their Exorbitances, till his Mind is fretted to such a Degree, as to be always troubl'd and foaming. And to this ill Temper, Pride and Self-Esteem, and Over-regard to a Man's own Interest, will make vast Additions; for, in such a Case, all the World will stand in his Way, and almost all he converses with will instigate and provoke his Passions.

SUCH a Churl Nabal seems to have been; for when David, at a Festival-Time, sent to him in a very modest manner, to ask a Supply of Food for himself and his Company, (who deserv'd some Regard for the Protection they had given his Servants and Flocks) he, instead of giving a civil Refusal, * flew upon them, and rail'd at them, and indeed (as the

* 1 Sam. xxv. 14, 16, 17.

Servant told his Mistress) *was such a Son of Belial, that a Man could not speak to him.* Nor did he for this Reason dare to make a plain Representation of the Fact to his Master. And indeed this is a Vice more common to those that are *Wealthy*, because they have less external Check given to their Passions, and are more us'd in other Instances to indulge themselves. But the *Poor* also, if they give way to repining and grudging at others, will quickly grow up into full as *spiteful* a Temper, though, for their own Interest, they must keep it under Guard, and not let it show it self in such churlish Carriage, especially to their *Superiors*.

NAY, farther, a Man may not only grow into such a mischievous Temper from *Passion indulg'd*, but from *Principle*, and that a *Principle of Religion* too, such as it is. Thus our Saviour, when he forewarn'd his Disciples of the Troubles likely to befall them for their Christian Profession, told them, * *That they should be put out of the Synagogues; and that the Time would come, that whosoever slew them, would think they did GOD good Service.* And when once a pretended Zeal for GOD comes in to maintain, and justify, and commend our Passion and Spite, they will grow unlimited. There is no *Antidote* against the *Venom* of them. A Man's Reason and Conscience may help to fasten a Conviction upon him, and work a Cure, when he is in *common Cases* a Slave to his Passions. But when he pleads Authority for his Malice, and that of the *highest Kind*, and thinks himself acted by a warm Zeal for GOD, he is grown incurable. Common Methods of Recovery will not reach him. His *Principles* support his *Malice*, and a pretence of Religion, and a regard to the Glory of GOD covers him all over, and renders him impenetrable to all Conviction. No Arrow of this Kind will enter.

AND yet such Principles have been maintain'd and propagated amongst Men, to the *infinite Prejudice* of true Religion, and the *Waste and Desolation* of many Countries. And that not only among abandon'd Jews,

* John vii. 1, 2.

given up of GOD to their own sinful Inclinations, and to fill up the Measure of their Iniquities, that * *Wrath might come upon them to the uttermost*. Or *Mahometans*, who profess themselves oblig'd to propagate their Religion on the Point of the Sword, and force Men to acknowledge that Imposture. But also in a Church, that gives her self the specious Name of *Catholic*, and would limit Christianity and Salvation to her *corrupt Communion*. For, as this Church pretends, all natural Relations, all the Bonds of civil Society are dissolv'd and unt'y'd by *Heresy*; and Men may destroy their *Prince*, their *Parent*, their *Brother*, or their *Bosom-Friend*, if he be but Excommunicate; and all are Excommunicate *de facto* that are *Heretics*; and all are *Heretics* that they are pleas'd to make such. To be sure all are such that dare to *gainsay*, or so much as *dispute* any Opinion that serves to support the Church's Grandeur, Authority, or Interest. Nay, nor only may this be done with Impunity, but Heaven and eternal Happiness are promis'd as a Reward to all who die in War against the Enemies of the *Roman Faith*, whether *Infidels* or *Heretics*; and this by the *Decretals* of *Popes*.

AND they have acted up to these Principles upon all fit and proper Occasions; and numberless Villanies have been invented and acted to prevent the Churches Danger, and support her Cause. *Private Assassins* have been hired, *Armies* have been raised, not only to war against *Infidels* on no just Pretence, but to murder *Innocents* in cold Blood, who oppos'd their Corruptions, and bare Testimony to the *Truth of the Gospel*. Thousands have, upon this Account been butcher'd, without Distinction of *Sex*, or *Age*, or *Quality*, and this by Licence and the most sacred Authority the Church could give. And the Actors have not only had their Commission *beforehand*, but have had their Actions justify'd and applauded, and themselves little less than Canoniz'd *afterwards* for their Crimes. Now where such a Principle of *blind Zeal* for GOD, meets with a Temper *spiteful*, *mischievous* and *enterprizing*, who

* 1 *Thess.* ii. 16.

can fix Bounds to the Rage, or the Ruin and Mischief to be effected by it? How well prepar'd, how ready and fit are such for the Work we are speaking of; for the *devising* and *fabricating* Mischief? But this being laid as the Foundation, I would,

2. Secondly, **OBSERVE**, that *devising Evil* doth imply, the *contriving* and *projecting* how to do *Mischief*, and that with Stress and Intention of Thought; such as doth fix, employ and even swallow up the Mind, and allow of no Diversion till it be brought to effect, and that in the following Instances.

1. First, **IN** *devising what kind of Mischief* to do. For the kinds of Mischief are innumerable: And 'tis the usual Enquiry of a spiteful and mischievous Mind, in what instance Revenge may be most *fully* glutted, when the Man dares to be open in prosecuting his Design, or most *securely* when he must be private and avoid Discovery, or most *effectually* in either Case. And accordingly sometimes the Design is form'd against a Man's *Fame*, sometimes against his *Estate*, sometimes against his *Person* or his *Life*, and sometimes the Mischief reaches to *all*; nay and beyond these, to the Persons in whom he may have any *peculiar Interest* or *Concern*. Nay, and the Mischief cover'd over with the *pretext of Religion* aims at higher Interests still, and would many times destroy the *Soul*, as well as hurt the *Body*, and *make Prey* of the *Estate*. 'Tis with a peculiar Relish that this sort of People thunder out *Anathema's*, and at once deliver the *Body* to the *Secular Power* to be burnt, and decree *Damnation* to the *Soul*; and thus take full Revenge at once upon the *whole Man*. Now it requires some Closeness of Thought to chuse out, what will be most proper to accomplish the Intention of the mischievous Mind. Hence *David* tells us, his Enemies did * *imagine Mischief in their Hearts*. *Solomon* saith of such Persons, that † *they devise Mischief continually*; are constantly plodding and projecting for this purpose. And the Prophet *Esay* of the *Jews*, that they did ‡ *conceive Mischief*.

* *Psal.* cxi. 2. † *Prov.* vi. 4. ‡ *Esa.* lix. 3.

chief. Their Hearts were continually teeming with so pernicious an Offspring. But the kind of Mischief being once fixed,

2. Secondly, THERE must be farther Contrivance about the *Way* and *Method* wherein it may be effected. The former is Thought about the *End* to be pursued, this is about the *Way* and *Means*, whereby this End may be brought about. The Man first enquires in what Instance he may most fully glut his Malice; and the next Enquiry is, in what manner this may be most fully and effectually done. Thus, when * *Haman* had resolv'd to take full Revenge on *Mordecai*, by destroying his People together with himself, his End was then fix'd; and the next Enquiry was about the Means whereby he should accomplish this End, and what was to be done to effect that Destruction he had resolv'd upon. And thus when the Courtiers in *Babylon* had determined to ruin *Daniel*, † various Methods were sought out and tried, tho all fail'd them till they contriv'd to make *Fidelity* to his GOD, an Instance of *Treason* and *Disloyalty* to his Prince. And that in the end, through the just Judgment of GOD. prov'd their own *Ruin* too, instead of effecting *his*. But then,

3. Thirdly, ALL the foregoing Contrivance is only in order to Execution. Those who devise Evil, in the Sense of the *Wise Man* here in our Text, are not thus employ'd only to try the Vigor of their Imagination, or the Strength of their Thought, but with a Design to execute, what upon due Consideration appears the most feasible Project, either by their own Hands, or some fit and proper Instrument. For the Projector of Mischief is not always an Actor in it: He may contrive, but at the same time think it proper for another to execute. For tho he may be willing to humour his own Spite and Malice to the uttermost, yet there may be many Reasons why he should keep out of Sight; nay, and perhaps make the highest professions of Friendship, and carry the Heart of an Enemy under the treacherous Disguise and Countenance of a Brother. Thus

* *Esther* iii. 5, 8. † *Dan.* vi. 4, 5.

David complains of that wicked Politician *Achitophel*,
** It was not an Enemy, then I could have born it, q. d. I should*
have been less shock'd at it, and more ealy under it,
but my Guide, mine Equal, my Acquaintance. His Words
were softer than Oil, and yet sharp as drawn Swords. It
 may be necessary to bring his Design to effect, that he
 should keep on this Appearance, and employ others to
 do the Mischief which he hath contriv'd. And other
 Reasons may perswade him to keep his *Hand* out of
 the Plot, whilst his *Head* may have the whole Conduct
 of his own *Device*. But whatever Reasons may induce
 the Projector of Mischief not to act himself, yet he
 always plods with a Purpose, that it should be done
 by some Hand or other. And when he doth not think
 it proper for accomplishing his mischievous Purpose to
 act himself in it, this opens him a *new Scene* of Thought
 and Enquiry. It is to be consider'd, what are the Qua-
 lifications of a fit Instrument, and then enquiry must
 be made where such an one is to be found; and all
 this is to be done with the *utmost Secrecy*, that the De-
 sign may not take Air, and the Mischief be prevented.
 And the greater the Mischief and the more there are
 likely to be affected by it, the greater Application of
 Mind is necessary to bring it to effect. And still the
 more, when there is a *Confederacy* needful to carry it
 on, *proper Persons* are to be sought out, *fit Methods* are
 to be taken to break the Matter to them, and to tie
 them fast one to another; proper Parts of the Design
 are to be assign'd to proper Hands, and many other
 things to be done, that require close Thought and Ap-
 plication of Mind. So that in executing their mis-
 chievous Purposes as well as in fixing them, their
 Thoughts must be still busy and employ'd. But they
 do not form a mischievous Design, merely to amuse or
 please themselves with the Review of a fine Scheme,
 the Birth of their own Fancy or the Workmanship of
 their own Brain, but to put it in *Execution*. Till this
 be done 'tis an *Embryo*, or an unshapely Birth brought
 to no Form or Perfection. Nor will their Spite or Re-

* *Psal. lv. 12, 13, 21.*

venge be contented with the bare Consideration, that in such and such Instances, and by such and such Methods, they could hurt and be gratify'd to the full, unless what they have in View be effected. The Mischief must be *done* as well as *devised*.

AND thus have we finished our first Head of Discourse, and shown you what is implied in *devising Evil*. We are next to enquire,

II Secondly, IN what Sense those who do so, may be said to Err. And we shall Answer this Enquiry by the following Particulars, *viz.*

1. First, THEY Err as they do certainly Deviate from the Law of GOD, that should be the Measure of Mens Actions, and the Rule to which they should in all Things conform themselves. This Law in Holy Scripture is frequently compared to a *Path* or *Way*; those who sincerely endeavour to conform themselves to it, are said to † *walk in the Law of the LORD*: And to disregard the Authority of this Law, and live without conforming our Lives and Manners, our Minds and Dispositions to it, is call'd *erring*, or *going astray*. In this Sense *Manasseh* is said ‡ *to have made Judah to Err*, by those abominable Idolatries and wicked Practices, to which he gave so much Encouragement in the beginning of his Reign. And *Erring* is explain'd by * *not observing GOD's Commandments*. In this Sense *David* saith of himself, that ** *before he was afflicted he went astray*. In the same Sense saith GOD by the Prophet *Jeremy*, †† *My People have been lost Sheep; their Shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have turned them away upon the Mountains*. And in this Sense, those who *devise Evil* do certainly Err.

FOR it is plain to all such as have taken a View of the Laws of GOD, whether in their more imperfect Edition, among the *Jews*, or as they have receiv'd Improvement from the *Light* and *Spirit* of the Gospel, that they are fram'd for the Benefit and Advantage of

† *Psal.* cxix. 1. ‡ *2 Chron.* xxxiii. 9. * *Numb.* xv. 22. ** *Psal.* cxix. 67. †† *Jer.* i. 6.

particular Persons and Societies. They suppose Mankind link'd together by the strongest Bonds; and they tie those Bonds still faster, and oblige them to the greatest mutual Tenderneſs and Concern. And for this Reason they are the *beſt Fence* that can be about Mens Persons and Properties. Were they duely regarded by all Mankind, no *ſingle Perſon* in the whole Body, no *leſſer Community* could be Inſecure, or expoſ'd to any Harm; but every Man's true Intereſt, and that in all his deareſt Concerns, would be moſt directly purſued. Our *Bleſſed Lord and Maſter*, and the Apoſtle Paul after him, ſums up our Duty in that ſweet and comprehensive Word, Love. † *On this Commandment*, ſaith our Saviour, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* ‡ *This*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *is the fulfilling of the Law.* The Law being it ſelf a fair Transcript of that *Bleſſed Nature*, which could be deſcribed by no more pertinent nor ſignificant Term, by the beloved Apoſtle himſelf, than that of Love. * *GOD is Love.* Spite and Miſchief are the Temper and Work of the Devil, ** *Who was a Murderer from the Beginning*, and †† *goes about ſeeking whom he may devour.* And if this be the true State of the Caſe, it is manifeſt, that ſuch as *deviſe Evil* do widely deviate from that Rule of Duty to which they ſhould conform themſelves; from that Path of Life to which they ſhould confine their Steps. They forget the great Purpoſes, and the wiſe Rules of Living, which they ſhould ever attend to and have in their Eye. But,

2. *Secondly*, IT may imply, that they frequently miſs their Purpoſe, and are miſtaken in their Meaſures. They form Devices that prove inſufficient to attain their Ends. Indeed they are ſeldom miſtaken about the *Miſchief it ſelf* to be done by them. They are very ſure to fix their Thoughts upon ſome Evil or other, that, if it can be effected, will be miſchievous enough, and very much to the Grief and Hurt, if not the utter Ruin of thoſe who are *Objects* of their Spite

† Matt. xxii. 39. ‡ Gal. v. 14. * 1 John iv. 8.
 ** John viii. 44. †† 1 Pet. v. 8.

and Revenge. Indeed in chusing out the Kind of Mischief they would do, they may in some measure be mistaken, and prefer what in Fact is a *Lesser* Mischief, under a Notion, that it is the *Greatest*. But this Mistake is not a very *common* one with them, they are much more liable to be deceiv'd about the Method, wherein the Mischief is to be done, with most *Security* to themselves, and most *Success*. And many Times, when they have most wisely concerted their Measures, an unforeseen Accident or Occurrence may break them at once, and ruin all their sanguine Hopes and Prospects. And thus mischievous Persons have often miscarry'd and fail'd of their Designs. Thus *Pharaoh* fail'd of Success in his artful Method, to prevent the Encrease of the Children of *Israel*. Thus vain and ineffectual was the Attempt of *Saul*, and his flattering Courtiers, to ruin *David*. And thus was the immense Mischief, intended by *Haman*, against the whole People of the *Jews*, to avenge the imaginary Injury he had receiv'd from *Mordecai*, by a sudden Turn of the King's Mind, defeated. It must be own'd indeed, that the Means pitch'd upon by *Haman* and *Pharaoh* seem'd very proper to attain their Ends. But as such Devisers of Evil generally leave Providence out of their Scheme, it is no Wonder that GOD should, by unexpected Turns, often blast all their Measures at once, and defeat their most promising Designs. They can never effect their Purpose without *his Leave*; their Design is not therefore in their *own Power*, and for this Reason they frequently miss their Aim when they are most sure they cannot be mistaken. And in *this Sense*, which is the common Sense of the Word, they may be said to Err. They fail of their Intention and miss their Mark. Nay,

3. *Thirdly*, THIS may intimate, that many Times they bring the *Like*, or a *greater Mischief on themselves* than that which they devis'd for others. It is under the Notion of Good to *themselves*, that they are pursuing an hurtful and mischievous Intention against *others*. It is somewhat that will gratify a revengeful or malignant Temper. But when instead of reaching this imaginary Good, they fall into great Mischief and Evil

Evil themselves, are they not grossly disappointed and mistaken? They Err from the Path of *Duty* and *Religion*, of *Reason* and *Humanity*, and those who have once lost the right Track, and wander in bye Paths, do frequently fall into many and unexpected Dangers. They know not whither they are going, and often meet with Death and Ruin in their *Errors*. And thus those who watch for the *Innocent*, and contrive to do him Harm, do oftentimes plot and project their own *Ruin* only: *Themselves* are taken in the *Snares* they laid, and all the *Mischief* discharges on their own *Heads*. * *They conceive Mischief*, and not only bring forth *Vanity*, but *Falshood*. They not only fail of their Purpose, but fall into the *Ditch* which *themselves* had made, and into the *Pit* which they had digged. Their *Mischief* returns on their own *Head*, and their violent *Dealing* on their own *Pate*. For which Reason, *David* in another Place thus Triumphs in Divine Protection, † *The Heathen are sunk into the Pit they made; in the Net they hid, is their own Foot taken. The LORD is known by the Judgments he executeth: The Wicked is snared in the Work of his own Hands.*

AND though this is not the *certain* and *perpetual* Event, as to all mischievous Designs form'd against the *Innocent*, it is a very common one. For all Events are in the Hands of GOD, and his over-ruling Providence alone can bring any Design to effect, and he doth often interpose and defeat those mischievous Designs that are form'd against the *Innocent*, and turn them against the *Contrivers*. And his peculiar Concern for his own People, *those whom he hath chosen out to place his Name among them*, gives them, in ordinary Cases, good Security against such wicked Attempts. Nay, this Concern for his Church and People, doth many times interest him in the Welfare and Safety of *particular Nations*, and is their Security too. And how often hath he, in a Manner surprising to the whole World, counterwork'd those that projected the Ruin of his People, and brought this *Mischief* home upon themselves?

† *Psal. xii. 14, 15, 16.* * *Psal. ix. 15, 16.*

Pharaoh who would wear out the *Israelites* with excessive Toil and Labour, and sacrifice their Male-Children to his cruel Humour and his Jealousies, was himself, and all his Host, drown'd in the *Red Sea*, after they had lost all their First-Born in one Night, even the *Hopes of Egypt*. *Haman* who had contriv'd the Murther of all the Innocent *Jews* in pure Revenge to *Mordecai*, fell, together with his Family, before that innocent Man, whom he sought to destroy together with his People, and by his Malice open'd him a Way to the highest Dignity and Honour of which a Subject was capable. And those Princes, who contriv'd the Death of *Daniel*, were disappointed in their Hopes, and became themselves a Prey to the Lions, whose Teeth and Rage the injur'd Saint escap'd. And many Instances of the like kind might be fetch'd from other *History*, besides that of the Bible. And indeed to come to the

III. *Third Thing propos'd*, THE bringing what we have said to the Purpose of our present Assembly: We have before us a pregnant Instance of this kind, in the double Salvation we are this Day met to celebrate, *viz.* That from the *Powder-Plot*, in the Reign of King *James I.* and that from *Popery* and *Arbitrary Power*, under King *James II.* his Grandson, by the seasonable Arrival of the *Prince of Orange*, afterward our glorious King *William*, a Name never to be mention'd by a *Britain* and a *Protestant* without Honour.

THE first of these Designs was a *Monster of Mischief*. Could any Wickedness, acted by private Hands, be well more comprehensive, than at once to destroy all the Chiefs of the Nation, the King and *Royal Family*, the whole Body of the *Peerage*, and a great Part of the *principal Commons in England*? And yet the Views of those engag'd were not bounded here, the Ruin of the Nation, and the sinking the whole *Protestant Interest* throughout *Europe* together with it, was the prodigious Purpose they drove at. And could Spite be well carried farther, or Mischief and Malignity be more in Perfection than here? When so many innocent Men,
and

and of the most eminent Stations in the Kingdom, were at once to be blown into the Air, and all the Remains of pure Christianity to be *blown away* with them? How diabolical must those Principles be, that could inspire Men with this deliberate *Spite*, this *slow and sober Rage*, and hatch so vast a Mischief at first, and justify, or so much as excuse it afterward? And yet to the Account of their Principles, their *religious Principles*, must this be charg'd. The Men had no *private Spleen* or Disgust to hurry them on to this Extravagance, no *personal Affront* to revenge, no *private Interest* to pursue, nor doth it appear they were in their common Temper, so prodigiously spiteful and mischievous. No, they were instigated by the Doctrines of *their Church*, and a Zeal for it which *they themselves* esteem'd, and the *highest Authority* among them had pronounc'd, meritorious. Pure Spite and Ill-nature could never have carry'd them so far. But when once any have given themselves up to the Conduct of the *original Murderer*, and they are by specious Shows and Appearances of Religion prompted to do his Work, how far beyond all the common Attempts even of *degenerate Nature* will he carry them away! And how much will he improve them into his own Resemblance!

THIS was a Device mischievous to the *last Degree*; whether we consider the *more immediate Purpose*, which was to blow up the whole *English Legislature* at once; or the *remoter Views*, which were still more mischievous, to ruin the *Protestant Interest* throughout the World. And one would think, that those among Mankind, that are not wholly lost to Sense of Shame, should never defend it, nor think nor speak of those concerned in it, without *Horror* and the utmost *Indignation*. And indeed, the *Romish Party* would fain wipe themselves clean from the Guilt of the Fact, if they knew how. † But their *Doctrines*, the busy Medlings of their *Priests* and *Jesuits*, and the Honour they have done to more than one who had an Hand in it, fasten it upon

† See a Memorial for Protestants on Nov. 5. And Dean Kennet's Sermon before Lord Mayor, on Nov. 5. 1715.

the Party, and plainly make it out not to have been the rash Attempt of a few desperate Men.

AND how near was the Mischief compleated ! how kind an *interposure* of Providence was it, that hinder'd it from taking Effect ! It was carried on with all the *Secrecy* imaginable, and therefore with all imaginable *Prospect of Success*. The Men engaged were, by *their religious Principles*, made hardy enough for any desperate Attempt, and had by Ties, *most solemn*, bound themselves to utmost Secrecy. The Blow was just ready to be given, when by the immediate Hand of Providence, their Measures were broken at once, and the *Conspiracy* detected, and many of the *Conspirators* seized, and made to suffer the Demerit of their Treason.

AND did not the Devisers of this prodigious Mischief Err ? A Mischief so far exceeding all the private Robberies, Murders or Assassinations ever heard of ! Did they not deviate from the Rule and Spirit of the Gospel ? Can that *impudent* Church that assumes the Name of *Catholick*, and limits all hopes of Salvation to her own Communion ; that is to say, to the Persons who live and act in *blind dependance on her Guides* ; can she defend so wicked an Attempt, and reconcile it with her high Pretensions ? Is this the *Meekness*, *Gentleness*, and *Love*, the *Innocence*, *good Nature*, and *good Will*, that are the *proper Marks* of Christianity, the genuine Temper of a real Christian ? Are these the *holy Methods* GOD appointed to spread the Gospel of his Grace, and propagate the True Religion ! Must it in this way conquer and subdue the World, and by so *dark a Scene of Mischief*, settle it self among the Nations ! Is not *Mahomet's* Method of propagating his Imposture the more Humane and generous by far ? He honestly declares this may be done by open Violence, acts as he thinks, and by the Sword endeavours every where to plant it. He avows his Design, and is fair and open in pursuing it. But such *clandestine Attempts*, such horrid Mischief wrapt up in Darkness and Disguise, are the genuine Effects of *Romish Zeal*, the honest *Mahometan* would disavow them, the *Pagan* would derest them. And must not this bring Blushes into

into the Face of this pretended *Mother Church*, unless it be dy'd too deep with *the Blood of Saints*, to have its *Colour Chang'd*? But if she will not be brought to an open Confession, that this was a wide Deviation from the Spirit and Rule of the Gospel, should it not be matter of Praise and Thanksgiving to us, that the Wretches engag'd miss'd their End, that they were led into an Error, and snar'd and taken themselves, when they had just brought their Design to bear, and were ready to bury our *Constitution* and the *Protestant Religion* together in the Rubbish of our *Senate-House*. To us, I say, even at this Distance; for had the Design then taken Effect, the *Protestant Religion* had in all fair appearance been extirpated; but had GOD by a Miracle maintain'd it, we had at this time wanted a King *GEORGE* to fill the *British Throne* with so much Glory to himself, with so much Honour to the *British Nation*, and so much Comfort and Delight to his faithful Subjects.

AND then as to the *later Attempt* for our Destruction, (the frustration of which hath made the Deliverance of this Day a *double one*) I mean, King *James* the II^d's Design to introduce *Popery*, and settle That and Tyranny amongst us. This was indeed the *more generous* of the Two; it was carry'd on in a more open manner and avow'd, tho in flat Contradiction to the most sacred Promises and Oaths, and therefore avowed because there was *so fair* a Prospect of Success. When the People had been so long prepar'd for a tame Surrender of their Liberties, by the perpetual Din of *unlimited Obedience* due to the *Prince's Will*, whether Laws were made the Rule of it or no; when an Insurrection had been suppress'd; when Laws made for Defence of the *Protestant Religion*, by keeping *Papists* out of Power, had been dispensed with, and an Army rais'd to support and maintain that Prince in all his *lawless Pretensions*; and a *neighbouring Tyrant*, who had glutted himself with Blood *prodigally shed* in War, and *greedily suck'd* in Persecution, was oblig'd in Interest, by Principle and by Alliance, to lend him all possible Assistance. And yet in the very Article of Execution the Plot was spoil'd, and the vast Design so eagerly push'd

push'd on by *Romish* Instruments *here*, and so greedily expected to take Effect by *Romanists abroad*, miscarry'd at once.

AND do we not here also see the same Deviation from the Rule and Spirit of the Gospel, as in the former Design. The same Purpose and Resolution to settle the *Romish* Religion right or wrong amongst us, and destroy our excellent Constitution. For this might as effectually be done, by our Prince's tearing down all the Fences of our *Liberties*, our *Rights*, and our *Religion*, as by private Mens blowing up our *Legislators*. Nay, in all appearance it might have been more effectually done, and with no less Wickedness and Injustice. Unless it be impossible for Subjects to have any Right at all, which is a Sentiment can never pass, I think, upon a *Briton*; or else the Person of the Prince is *so sacred*, as to be exempt from all Obligation by the most *solemn Oaths*. A *Maxim* utterly destructive of all *Religious Veneration* for an Oath, the great Security of mutual Confidence among Men. But whether the Measures then taken for our Ruin will, *with those concerned in them*, pass for Deviations from the Rule and Spirit of the Gospel or no; I am sure 'tis matter of unspeakable Joy to us, that by the gracious Providence of GOD the Design was blasted, and the Attempt was made to turn to the Ruin of those who devised the Mischief. In this respect they found themselves *mistaken*. By the righteous Providence of GOD they were befooled, and led into a *fatal Error*. Surely we may say after *Solomon*, That those who *devise Evil, Err*. They wander from the Path of Duty, they frequently are very much deceiv'd in their mischievous Schemes, and are many times buried under *those Ruins*, which they design'd to make a Grave for others. It remains now

IV. And Lastly, THAT we should consider how this Truth may, and *should be improved* by us. I shall only offer Two Things to your Thoughts, as proper Instructions and Advice from such a Subject as this.

1. First, TAKE care to *avoid the Evil we have been describing*. To abhor and shun them, is the proper Use we ought to make, of the Sins and Miscarriages of others.

others. To keep our selves as far as possible, out of the reach of *Infection* by them, and *Temptations* to them. Let this be our Concern and Care in this particular Case. Let us never be of the Number of those that *devise Evil*, * Let us at no time be among them. In order hereunto,

First, LET us be advised to endeavour the † *Conquest of our Passions*. This is opposing the Evil in its Original and Rise. And *Principiis Obsta*, withstand Sin in the very beginnings of it, is not only proper but needful Advice. If we would be free from an envious and malignant Temper, and thereby avoid such Employment as we have been describing; let us heartily Labour to *subdue* and *quiet our Passions*, that they may not presently kindle and break out into a raging Flame. And indeed, in order to the doing this effectually, 'tis not only needful, that we should call in the softning and soothing Influences of the Holy Spirit, the *Spirit of Love*, by fervent Prayer; but endeavour also to be mortified to the *Enjoyments of the World*. If once we are dead to them, we shall not so easily be ruffled by the *Evils of Life*. And when we can bear the being slighted and abus'd by our Fellow-Creatures, the *Fuel* of our Passion will be withdrawn. And if we can prevent the risings of *Anger* and *Revenge*, it will be much easier to keep our selves from the Power of *Malignity and Spite*: By which I mean, a Proneness to do Mischief and Hurt to others without Provocation, from pure *Ill Will* and *Rancour of Spirit*.

2. Secondly, LET us take Care not to draw in our Principles to succour and enforce our Passions, and make Religion and Zeal for GOD a Cloak to Malice or Revenge. We justly abominate the Principles of *Papists* for being so Bloody and Destructive: and detest their *mischievous Practices*, the genuine Offspring of such wicked Principles. But we are not so careful to watch our selves, tho by Nature we are prone to the like Mistakes, have the like unruly Passions with them, and as

† *Prov. i. 10* ——— *16.* † *Psf. xxvi. 5.* ‡ *Ep4. iv. 16, 31.*

apt to run out into the same Extravagancies. And if we do not carry our Revenge and Spite against those who differ from us, to the same *pitch of Inhumanity with them*, and murder our Neighbours Persons; we too often suffer our furious Zeal to wound and stab their *Character and Reputation*, and this under the *Mask and Colour of Religion*, and, as we are willing to think, by Authority from GOD. Our *own Sentiments* about religious Matters are, in our *fond Opinion*, *hallow'd* all, and therefore differing Sentiments from ours appear wicked to us, and fit to be abhor'd. And hereupon we look upon those that embrace them with a *jealous*, if not an *evil Eye*. We often entertain Suspicions of them that are Unjust, and suffer these to grow up to Distance and Estrangement from them, and oftentimes to settle into *deliberate Spite and Rancour*. And then if we can but sanctify this Spite with the Name of Religious Zeal, and hate and revile, and persecute our Neighbour *in the Name of GOD*, this Outrage, which in other Cases would be detestable, grows *Commendable*, yea and *Meritorious*. Whereas, whatever the Pretence may be, Christianity will never countenance Spleen, and Spite, and Violence, whether it *foams out* at the Mouth in envenom'd Speech and Language, or *rages out* in the Life in Murder, Massacre, Plundering and Devastation. Let us therefore look to it, that our Religion be not fetch'd in to the Succour of our *Passions*, lest those prevail and quickly get the better of our Religion.

3. *Thirdly*, LET us do what we can, to make Love to GOD and Men, the very *vital Heat of our Hearts*. That we may ever act under the Influence of this generous and heavenly Principle. That we may love GOD for his *own sake*, and that with a superlative Affection, and love our Fellow-Creatures for GOD's sake. *Those* that belong to him and bear his Image, for their Relation to him and Resemblance of him: And *those* that may be Enemies to him and us, in Obedience to his holy Command, and in Conformity to the Example of *our Lord and Saviour*. Oh what Benevolence, and Kindness shew'd themselves in his Life and Carriage! Tho he was treated in the most *inhuman*

maner manner by ungrateful Men; tho they run upon him with the fiercest Spite, and endeavour'd at once to murder his *Fame* and take away his *Life*: Tho they were implacable as well as fierce, nor would be diverted for a Moment from their *murderous Purposes*; yet nothing appears like a return of *Revenge* and *Spite* in his whole Behaviour. * *When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffer'd all this Rudeness and Outrage, he did not show so much Resentment of the Injury, as to threaten his Persecutors.* No, in the midst of all this Provocation, † *he prayed his Father to forgive their Wrongs.* Surely that Kindness and Good Will that were so *Conspicuous* in our *Redeemer*, should, in some degree at least, be *visible* in us. We should love our *Enemies* as he did, nay and *his Enemies*. Tho we should abhor their *Enmity*, yet should we show our Love to them by an hearty Endeavour to cure it, and much rather do so, than pretend out of Zeal for Christ and Love to him, to do any thing hurtful or mischievous to them. And if a generous Love to all our Fellow-Creatures were once wrought into the very Frame of our Minds, and this cherish'd by all possible Arguments and Motives, we should have an effectual Antidote against *devising Mischief* our selves, and all those Passions and Principles that give birth unto it. We should hardly be provok'd, and should never have a spiteful Inclination to hurt those whom we truly and tenderly Love. And thus much of the first Practical Advice founded on the Truth we have been explaining.

2. Secondly, LET us praise GOD for our Double Deliverance, as on this Day, from such mischievous Devices. However the first may be forgotten, and the last condemn'd and curs'd by too many amongst us, and deem'd a Judgment rather than a Salvation: Let us look back on both with grateful Hearts, rejoice in them, and give GOD the Praises due to his Name. And that in the two Instances following, viz.

* 1 Pet. ii. 23. † Luke xxiii. 34.

1. First, LET us rejoice and bless GOD, that these *mischievous Devices* did not take Effect. That the *first Design* was discovered, and blasted by the Discovery; and the *last* frustrated and defeated, when our Enemies in their forward Hopes had already destroy'd us. How near were both of them accomplish'd; and had they been effected, how *vast a Ruin* must have follow'd? The Nation must have been fill'd with Confusion, and drown'd in Blood, if not delug'd over with Error of the grossest Kind, and blind Idolatry and Superstition. Our *Bibles* must have been snatch'd out of our Hands, and *legendary Fables* made to supply *their room*. Sober and *spiritual Devotion* must have given way to *trifling Pomp* and *Pageantry*, to barbarous *Prayers* utter'd in an *unknown Tongue*. The *Worship* of one GOD, by Christ the *only Mediator*, must in a manner have been renounc'd, that *idolatrous Homage* might be paid to *Angels* and *Saints*, and many of these *Mushroom Saints* too, of whose heavenly Extraction we have no other Proofs, than what idle Monks have given us in *visionary Legends*, or the *Mother of Harlots* in *Mock-Canonizations*. And the *Rack*, and the *Halter*, and the *Faggot*, and the *kind Dragon*, or the *merciful Inquisition* must have been employ'd to fright us out of our Wits, and force a Religion upon us, so abhorrent from *Reason*, *Sense*, and *genuine Christianity*. And shall we not rejoice that the *Mischief* miscarry'd, when 'twas just come to the Birth, and the Protestant Religion was hereby preserv'd to us, and the Protestant Interest secur'd throughout the World? Why, to look back no farther than the *Revolution*, had King James push'd his Design with Success, and carried his Point among us here, and then gone on in conjunction with Lewis XIV. to destroy the *Northern Heresy* (as they call our holy Religion) there had hardly been a *Professor* of it at this Time left on Earth. And is it not astonishing, that any now among us should *Curse* the Hand that sav'd them, and snatch'd *that Church*, for whose Interest they pretend such *huge Concern*, from the Jaws of Death! Can Protestants think coldly, and *without Concern*, of having the whole Protestant Interest destroy'd? And prefer the *imaginary Rights* of any Mortal Man, to the

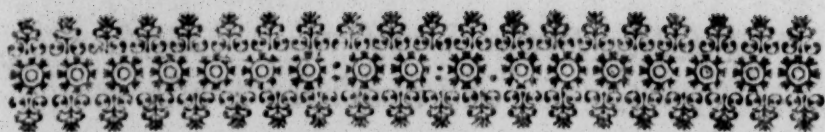
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Preservation of sound Religion from utter Ruin! Ay, but *fiat Justitia & Ruat Cælum*. Let us do Justice, and leave GOD to take care of Religion. And are the Men who would seem in this Instance to put so high a Value on Justice, so tender of the Rights of their Fellow-Creatures in all other Instances? What when they have stirr'd up the lawless Multitude to demolish Edifices set apart for Divine Worship, to rife private Houses, to abuse and insult peaceable Fellow-Subjects that never did them any Harm. Have these injur'd Fellow-Citizens no Rights, for which the warm and hearty Lovers of Justice should show themselves concern'd? And is not this glaring Partiality an Evidence, that these Men impose upon the World or themselves, when they profess or think that they are influenced to what they do, by such a noble Principle as love to Justice; would to GOD that they were once convinc'd how much they are mistaken. We would by no means return upon them with a railing Accusation. But for their own Sakes and ours, and the common Interest of the World, we would pray that the LORD would rebuke their murmuring and mischievous Spirit. I am sure that they, as well as we, have reason to rejoice and bless the LORD, that hitherto their Hopes have been defeated, and their Hands restrain'd from doing that Mischief to themselves and us, for which their Hearts have been prepar'd. But if they will not, let us know our Happiness, and rejoice in it, and render GOD the Praise due to his Name. Yet we are in Possession of the true Religion, and now we have a Lover and Protector of it on the Throne, and a fair Prospect of a long Succession of the like Guardians for our Faith and Laws, to finish and compleat that great Deliverance which we are now assembled to Commemorate.

2. Secondly, LET us endeavour to walk worthy of our Deliverance. We are met to rejoice in the Safety of the Protestant Religion and Interest, and that we are not delug'd over with Romish Errors, Superstitions and Corruptions. And do we indeed rejoice in this Deliverance, and yet allow our selves in as gross Deviations from true Religion, as any of the Corruptions of the Romish Church? Rejoice that we don't worship Saints and

and *Angels*, and dishonour GOD by Superstition and Idolatry, whilst we make no scruple of neglecting his Worship, of trampling under Foot his Laws, and dishonouring him by *Profaneness* and *Blasphemy*, by *Immorality* and *Lewdness*, by *Fraud* and *Injustice*, and by offering up our Hearts to *Mammon*, and preferring the World before GOD? Are these Things Consistencies? What, shall we call our selves zealous and hearty *Protestants*, and not be *Christians* all the while. If we do indeed value our selves upon being *Protestants*, let us make this appear by our Value for true and sound Religion. The *Protestant* Religion is nothing else but true and genuine Christianity, clear'd of all *Romish* Depravation, and restor'd to its *primitive Simplicity* and *Beauty*. Let us look to it then, that we be *Christians* indeed, that we do heartily believe and embrace the *Christian Doctrines*, that we do yield to the Influence of *Christian Principles*, that we do walk by *Christian Rules*, and that we are possess'd of a truly *Christian Spirit* and *Temper*, and take care that we do not * receive the Grace of GOD in vain, but that we † be taught thereby to deny all *Ungodliness* and worldly Lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this World, with our Eyes and Hearts fixed on the blessed heavenly Hope. That as we have a better Religion than *Romanists*, we may lead better Lives. This is the most proper Way to show our selves Glad for the double Salvation of this Day. This is the only Way wherein we can show our selves truly Thankful to GOD for it. The LORD grant that we may have such a thankful Sense of his Mercy and Salvation, as thus to improve it, and endeavour to walk worthy of it. Amen.

* 2 Cor. vi. 1. † Tit. ii. 12, 13.



Myſterious Providence.

GREAT Ruler of the Earth and Sky,
In boundleſs Deeps thy Counſels lie.
Nor can we track thy wond'rous Way
Through Awful Night or Dazling Day.

SOMETIMES thy Saints, with Sun-ſhine bleſt,
Enjoy Proſperity and Reſt.
And under Covert of thy Wing
Securely fit, and ſmile and ſing.

SOMETIMES by raging Tempeſts toſs'd,
Well nigh the ſhatter'd Ark is loſt.
Thy Servants ſink, and drowning Call,
“ Help LORD, or elſe we periſh All.

INSULTING Champions proudly boaſt
Their Proweſs, and deſy thine Hoſt.
Too ſtout to fear Deſeat or Harm
From them, or thine Avenging Arm.

WHIST weaker Spite, with like Intent,
From Craft expects the like Event.
The deepeſt Arts of Miſchief tries,
And hopes to 'ſcape All-ſearching Eyes.

THY

*THY sudden Strokes have sham'd the Boasts
Of mighty Chiefs, and num'rous Hosts.
And in the very Depth of Grief,
Desponding Saints have had Relief.*

*MISCHIEF conceal'd by thickest Night,
Thy piercing Eye hath brought to Light.
Thy deeper Skill hath counter-wrought,
The Schemes of deepest Human Thought.*

*THY Foes have met their Overthrow,
When they design'd the fatal Blow,
Their nicest Arts have miss'd their Ends,
And prov'd the Safety of thy Friends.*

*GREAT GOD, whom Heav'nly Hosts revere,
Unsearchable thy Counsels are:
Yet Saints may track thy Pathless Ways
From gloomy Night to joyful Day.*

F I N I S



